

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-30. New claim 30 is hereby added. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-10, 13-15, 18-22 and 25-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Rawat et al. (U.S. Patent 6,662,340). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Rawat describes a client-side program that automatically fills out fields of forms contained in electronic documents. The program maps user data to the form fields by examining label text on the electronic form. When a field lacks a label, the program examines the field context or parses the underlying markup code of the form (abstract). In other words, Rawat explicitly deals with situations in which a blank form is provided (as illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, for example). He provides a tool for filling out the blank fields of the form by analyzing the program code that defines the appearance of the blank form (see col. 4, lines 27-62, for example).

Claim 1 recites a method for processing a document after contents have been filled into the fields on the document. The contents are read out and used in assigning labels to the fields, responsive to rules that are applicable to the contents.

In other words, although both Rawat and the present invention deal with the problem of assigning labels to fields, the approaches are totally different. Rawat examines the code behind an electronic form before the form is filled out, in order to determine how the form should be filled out. The invention recited in claim 1 takes the form after it has been filled out and examines the contents filled into the fields. Both Rawat and claim 1 are completely unambiguous as to this distinction and use almost the same language: “filling in” or “filling out” to mean inserting contents into the fields on a form.

Thus, whereas claim 1 uses contents that have been filled into the fields in order to assign labels to the fields, Rawat assigns labels to the fields (by analyzing the underlying code) in order to determine what contents to fill in. Any other reading distorts the plain meaning of Rawat and of the language of claim 1. Although the Examiner equated the “programmatic name” used by Rawat in assigning field labels (col. 7, lines 19-20) with the “contents of the fields” recited in claim 1, Rawat himself

makes clear that the programmatic name is a part of the form code, i.e., the program behind the form, and not something that has been filled into the form. Rawat neither teaches nor suggests that the contents that have been filled into the fields of a form might be used in assigning labels to the fields.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 as amended is patentable over Rawat. In view of the patentability of claim 1, claims 2, 3 and 6-10 are believed to be patentable, as well.

Claims 13 and 25 respectively recite apparatus and a computer software product, which operate on principles similar to the method of claim 1. These claims were rejected on the same grounds as claim 1. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, claims 13 and 25 as amended are believed to be patentable over Rawat, as are claims 14, 15 and 18-22, which depend from claim 13.

Claims 26, 28 and 29 respectively recite a method, apparatus and computer software product for computerized data processing. According to these claims, labels are assigned to the fields in a form on a computer responsively to information that has been filled into the form and to geometrical rules indicating an expected geometrical relationship between the fields. As explained above in reference to claim 1, Rawat neither teaches nor suggests the use of information that has been filled into the fields of a form in order to identify the fields themselves. Therefore, claims 26, 28 and 29, as amended, are believed to be patentable over Rawat, as is claim 27, which depends from claim 26.

Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Rawat in view of Hetherington (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0010714) or in view of Gupta et al. (U.S. Patent 6,199,079). Hetherington relates to processing of free-format data, while Gupta also describes a method of automatically filling in on-line forms. Neither of these references teaches or suggests the elements of independent claims 1 and 13 that are absent from Rawat. Therefore, in view of the patentability of claims 1 and 13, dependent claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23 and 24 are believed to be patentable, as well.

New claim 30 has been added to recite an additional feature of the present invention: the use of the method of claim 1 in processing a paper document, in which the contents have been marked in the fields of a template. This aspect of the present

invention is described in the specification on page 8, lines 4-19, and on page 11, lines 17-20. Claim 30 further emphasizes the distinction of the present invention over the cited art. Rawat, as noted above, deals with analysis of code corresponding to a blank electronic form. Claim 30, by contrast, relates to identifying field labels based on markings that have been filled into the form on paper. Therefore, claim 30 is believed to be independently patentable.

Applicant has studied the additional reference made of record by the Examiner and believes that all of the claims in the present patent application are patentable over this reference, whether the reference is taken individually or in any combination.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Peter Ludwig', written over a horizontal line.

S. Peter Ludwig

Reg. No. 25,351

Attorney for Applicants

DARBY & DARBY, P.C.

P.O. Box 5257

New York, NY 10150-5257

212-527-7700